

## **EPA Highlights of LUB GWMA Findings for Private Wells & April 2020 Discussions with State Agencies**

EPA is focusing on whether adequate action is being taken to provide public notice to affected private well owners/users, and if adequate public health protection and access to clean drinking water is available to private well users through a combination of education, provision, treatment, and technical assistance.

### **I. How many people rely on private wells for their drinking water (i.e., universe of private wells)?**

- 2010 census data on population in Umatilla & Morrow Counties– 82,335 people
- According to OHA information, CWS serve approximately 66,950 people in Umatilla and Morrow Counties.
- More than 15,000 people not served by CWSs could be relying on private wells
- **Confirm, clarify or provide any additional information regarding efforts to ensure private well users are aware of the actual and/or potential increase of nitrates in drinking water in the LUB GWMA and have adequate information for what steps can be taken to mitigate any health risks associated with elevated nitrates in these private wells.** It is unclear to what extent private wells in LUB GWMA are impacted by nitrates above 10 mg/L given:
  - 48% of well network exceeds 10 mg/L for nitrates, but ODEQ advised the percentage should not be extrapolated as representative of all private wells in the LUB GWMA;
  - ODEQ indicated there has not been widespread interest by private well owners in participating in the monitoring well network;
  - OHA estimates only 20% of results from real estate transactions are submitted to OHA for inclusion in the real estate transaction database;
  - Outreach efforts are limited by funding, and consist of outreach materials to targeted groups (e.g., well drillers) and project interns who develop and distribute informational materials on nitrates in the area and available treatment options; and,
  - Oregon Water Resources Department has data for all registered private wells, which has been referenced by state agencies for some purposes but is not integrated into overall LUB GWMA planning & tracking beyond the identified monitoring well network of 72 private wells & data from 56 wells reported through OHA's real estate transaction data base.
- A more comprehensive picture of private wells is not currently integrated into overall LUB GWMA planning efforts.

### **III. What actions can state or local agencies take to improve the understanding of the universe of domestic private wells in the LUB GWMA and ensure adequate notice to domestic well owners/users about nitrate contamination?**

- Open to discussing ideas for improving coordination via:

- EPA/ODEQ Performance Partnership Agreement (PPA) funding for LUB GWMA;
- LUB GWMA implementation of Second Action Plan; and/or,
- EPA 1431 Order.